

ORNITHOLOGY AND ZOOLOGY

Of the larger vertebrate animals, and for that matter, all terrestrial forms of life, Newfoundland is singularly deficient in comparison to Continental America, or even to the nearest provinces of the St. Lawrence Gulf. This is still more observant in regard to bird life, and it is rather remarkable that many which annually visit Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, or even Labrador, do not find their way here. It is not the scarcity of food that keeps them away, for there is an abundance of insect life in summertime, and wild fruits in Autumn. The country seems particularly adapted to some species of birds, such for instance as the wood-cock, yet this bird never visits our shores, though its congener, the Snipe, does so in considerable numbers, every season.

Yet, notwithstanding the paucity of birds in Newfoundland there is a sufficient number, to render the study and classification of those most interesting members of the Creation, a pursuit which possesses many attractive features.

The Song of Birds.

Who amongst us has not had his or her heart gladdened by the melodious song of the robin thrush, the sweet harbinger of spring, on his arrival here in the early days of April? Later on the loud harmonious note of the fox-sparrow,^{or} as we call him the "Foxy Tom," and many other sweet songsters, enliven the woods with joyous melodies tending to make life a more pleasurable gift to mankind.

It was no doubt the song of the birds which gave inspiration to Pan, the God of shepherds and patron of fishing and fowling, in fashioning his Pandian pipes, the most primitive of all musical instruments. The Poetess, Mrs. Browning, in her own inimitable style, thus sweetly versifies the fabrication of this instrument.